

light of their own mortality. Like us, their inner anatomy pulsates with invisible energies. Their crystalline skin vents and collects atmospheric gases in a rhythmic sequence of prolonged breaths ...When I behold the McDonald Fault in this way, the nagging challenges of bringing my puny existence into proper alignment with the abyss of earthly time seems less irksome. Maybe some day I'll meet this challenge head-on by taking that long walk down the McDonald line (p. 240–41).

If one had to quibble with this book, one could note that, as in *Shield Country*, the text purports to span the whole North American Subarctic when, in fact, it draws only from the greater Yellowknife area. There is nothing here about subarctic Quebec, Labrador, or Yukon. Nor is there anything that honours and acknowledges First Nations' presence on these lands, a story which is as tied to the natural history of subarctic flora, fauna, and geology as any scientific fact or figure. But these points are minor.

Jamie Bastedo is an engaging storyteller who combines the knowledge of a naturalist with the eye of an artist and the curiosity of a child. *Reaching North* is a book with a point of view and personality. It will become part of a growing canon of delightful little paperback books that celebrate the North. Although distinct, with its conversational tone and its roots in radio, this book might well be read in conjunction with other thoughtful northern perspectives, including *Playing Dead* by Rudy Wiebe, *Enduring Dreams* by John Moss, and perhaps René Fumoleau's *Here I Sit*, or even *Strange Things* by Margaret Atwood. Where Wiebe's texts of analysis are largely historical, Moss draws from literature and personal experience on the land; Fumoleau's poems arise from life with the Dene; and Atwood, in her contribution to the Clarendon Lectures at Oxford University in 1991 on the subject of the malevolent North, draws from Canadian literature. By contrast, drawing from the land itself and from an engaging array of people who know it well, Bastedo adds his voice to this conversation with a credible and distinctive tone. Northern tourists would do well to prime a visit with this book. Jamie Bastedo's infectious and entertaining mix of whimsy and northern science would also make excellent background reading for any graduate student or researcher heading up for a season in the field.

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- James Raffan
Faculty of Education
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
K7L 3N6
- SAMI POTATOES: LIVING WITH REINDEER AND PERESTROIKA. By MICHAEL P. ROBINSON and KARIM-ALY S. KASSAM. Calgary, Alberta: Bayeux Arts Incorporated, 1998. ISBN 1-896209-21-1 (hardbound); 1-896209-11-4 (softbound). 120 p., maps (including two foldout maps in pocket), illus., bib., index. Hardbound, Cdn\$24.95. Softbound, Cdn\$19.95.
- In 1995, scholars at the Arctic Institute of North America and their partners in Russia, with funding from the University of Calgary-Gorbachev Joint Trust Fund, initiated a project to "introduce the concept of natural resource co-management" to the Russian North (p. vi). This book recounts the project's goals, methodologies, and outcomes, and the impressions of some of the participants in the project along the way. Given the project's innovative methodology and its practicality, this book is likely to be of interest to a wide readership.
- Many Westerners have some knowledge of the Sami (formerly called Lapps) of Fennoscandia. Sami also inhabit the northwesternmost part of the Russian Federation, the Kola Peninsula. They have long herded reindeer—their basic food, akin to potatoes for other Russian citizens—in this area. Increasing competition with other land uses, including mining, smelters, sport fishing, and nuclear waste storage, has confronted the Sami and reduced their ability to pursue reindeer husbandry. If Soviet policies of sedentarization of the Sami and "rationalization" of reindeer herding (as well as industrial development) eroded traditional practices of husbandry, the economic crisis of the post-Soviet period has further challenged this age-old occupation and way of life. The core issue is control over land and its uses.
- Robinson and Kassam perceived that the Canadian experience with co-management regimes might suggest politically palatable solutions to the land-use conflicts of the Kola that were compromising the Sami's ability to continue reindeer husbandry. Canada has taken a global lead both in Aboriginal land-use and occupancy studies and in the formation of co-management regimes involving Aboriginals. The Canadian research team sought to present such concepts of mapping and co-management to the Sami, and then, if the Sami showed interest, lead a Sami team through a mapping project. The project trained a group of Sami both in the idea of how such mapping could inform land-use planning and in the methodology of such mapping. The mapping, once completed, was presented in

the two communities in which it was carried out (Jona and Lovozero), as well as in the regional capital (Murmansk). Carrying the participatory goals of the project to their closure, the authors had the resulting manuscript read back to their Sami partners for their input and corrections.

Sami Potatoes is a patchwork quilt of the Canadian researchers' diary accounts, structural analysis of a Sami origin myth, descriptions of mapping exercises, a newspaper article on the project, and promotional quotes from a sport fishing operation that has deprived the Sami of access to an important salmon river, to name just some of the component pieces. The authors intend this potpourri approach: "Some of what follows is excessively technical; some is historical, some is personal, some is journalistic, and some is traditional. *Sami Potatoes* has been written this way to challenge certain concepts of research, and to demonstrate the breadth of experience that truly participatory research projects are capable of generating." (p. 5). Herein lie both the strength and the weakness of the book.

Much of the book will provide an engaging read for the interested lay person. *Sami Potatoes* is all the more captivating in its use of colorful photos of the fieldwork sites and activities and its inclusion of two fold-out maps that indicate the final results of the community mapping. Historical drawings and diagrams also contribute to what is a very attractive monograph. Most importantly, the writing styles engross the reader, in their variety as well as quality. For the scholar about to begin fieldwork in the Russian North, the book provides amusing as well as edifying accounts of some of the pitfalls of travel and research. At the same time, over 12% of the book's text (p. 51–66) is dedicated to presenting the icons used in mapping, with brief descriptions of how the Kola Sami (or their reindeer) use the resources. This level of detail may be of limited interest except to those specifically studying Sami or northern Aboriginal resource use. To those individuals, insufficient detail about methodological approaches and pitfalls compromises the utility of such text.

The uses of this book for the specialist are admittedly more limited. Given the short length of the book, background history on the Kola Sami is, perforce, superficial, as are the discussions of land-use mapping and of co-management. I would have liked to see a much more developed treatment of the specific challenges—legal, cultural, economic, and environmental—that face the Sami in their attempt to implement such a land-use planning strategy and gain access to co-management of critical lands and resources. *Sami Potatoes'* all too brief bibliography does provide the interested reader a guide to further coverage on these subjects, but not a comprehensive one. We can hope that the authors will produce more detailed scholarly articles on this research, given its originality and practicality. While awaiting these, I recommend this book especially to those who have limited acquaintance with the Kola Sami, with participatory research methods, or with mapping as an important planning tool: it is a charming introduction on all these fronts and will surely whet the

appetite for further reading. To the specialist, it is an original example of the creative blending of different materials and genres, which, with recognition of its limits, should nevertheless be more liberally applied in academic writings.

Gail Fondahl
Geography Program/Natural Resources
and Environmental Studies
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, British Columbia, Canada
V2N 4Z9
fondahlg@unbc.ca